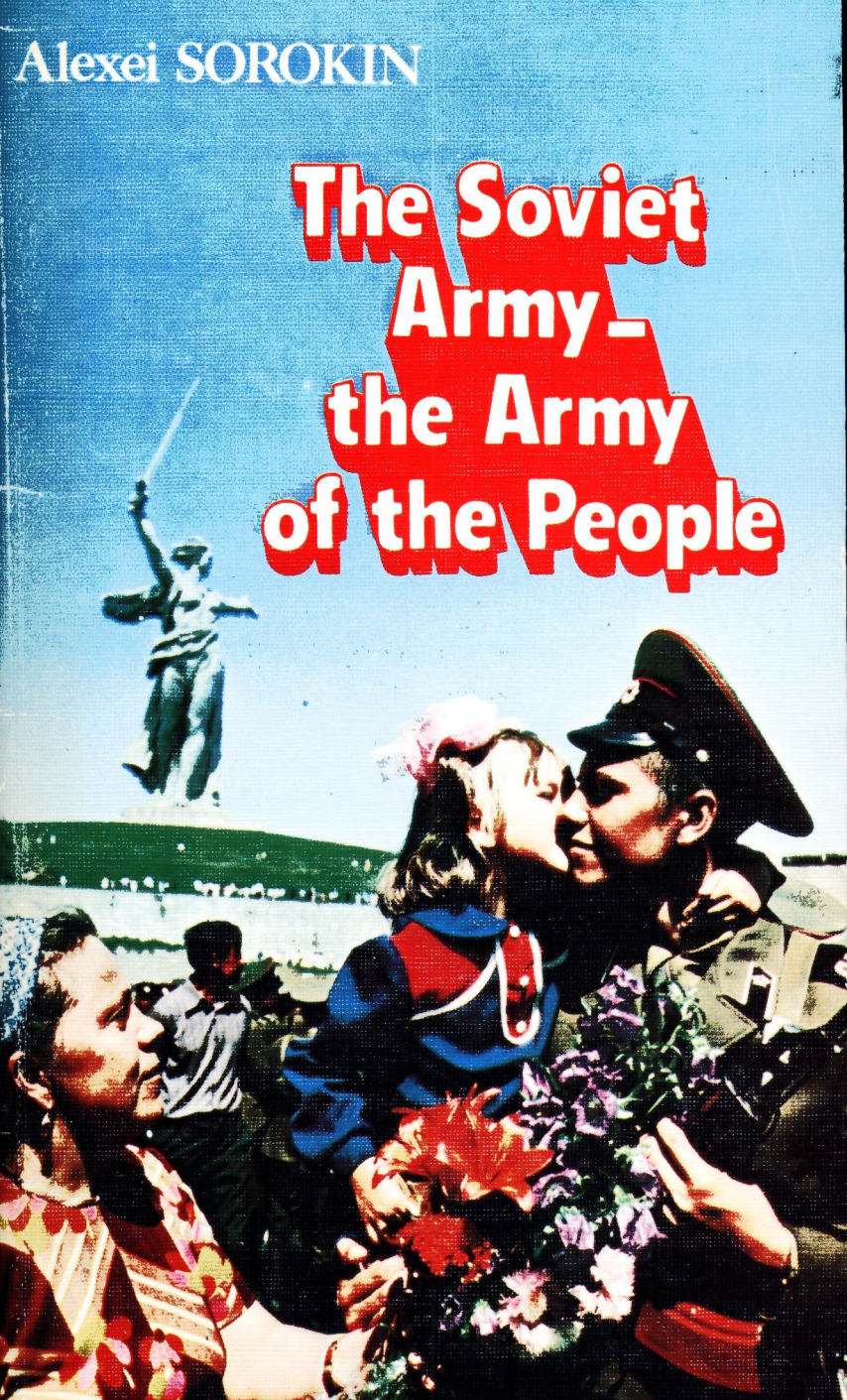
Alexei SOROKIN

The Soviet Army – the Army of the People



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The Soviet Army – the Army of the People

Novosti Press Agency Publishing House
Moscow, 1988

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TO THE READER

It is highly important for the people to be able to defend their revolutionary achievements. To do so it is above all necessary to build up an armed force devoted to the ideas of the Revolution and to the masses of the working people.

For the first time in the world such armed forces were created in the difficult period of the Civil War and foreign military intervention (1918-1920). It was the Communist Party and, personally, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin that organised the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

Later renamed the Soviet Army, it has had a splendid and glorious fighting record. Having repelled the repeated armed attacks by the forces of international reaction on the world's first socialist state and secured an epoch-making victory in the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Armed Forces continue to honourably fulfil their mission of safeguarding the achievements of the Great October Socialist Revolution against any encroachments of the imperialist aggressors. The Soviet Armed Forces are an instrument of the state of the whole people, which embodies the aims and interests of the working class, collective farmers and intellectuals. Today their mission is to defend the achievements of socialism, the peaceful labour of the Soviet people, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the socialist Homeland. The Soviet Armed Forces, together with those of the fraternal socialist countries, ensure the defence of the entire socialist community and serve as a bulwark of world peace and international security.

Along with the efforts to achieve a secure peace on the Earth and while accelerating the country's socio-economic development, the Party and the Soviet people are paying due attention to the maintenance of an adequate defence capacity. Not only the lessons from history compel them to do that. The

present international situation, aggravated by the intrigues of the aggressors and world reactionaries, has confirmed the validity of this. The Report to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union pointed out:

"Taking into account the complicated international situation and growing aggressiveness of the reactionary imperialist quarters, the CPSU Central Committee and its Political Bureau pay unflagging attention **to our country's defence capability, to the combat might of the Armed Forces of the USSR,** to the tightening of military discipline."

The masses of working people have formed and built up a people's army in response to the aggressive policies of the antisocialist forces. As long as the revolutionary achievements are threatened by military forces, the working people will be compelled to maintain an army and to make sure that it is capable of safeguarding their peaceful labour.

This pamphlet sets forth the Marxist-Leninist position on the purpose, character and specific features of the people's armed forces and provides an insight into how they were established and their military organisation was strengthened, the sources of their strength and the functions they are called upon to perform. It examines the development and increasingly close ties between the Soviet Armed Forces and the people and how this enhances their fighting capabilities.

The Soviet Army is an army of the people. Therefore, I believe that the experience accumulated during its formation, establishment and development is not only of theoretical, but also of practical interest. Knowledge of this experience may prove useful in the defence of revolutionary achievements in countries that are now in the process of building a new life. If this pamphlet is helpful in comprehending the nature of the Soviet Armed Forces and in the utilisation of their experience, I will consider its purpose accomplished.

Aleksei SOROKIN

THE REVOLUTION MUST DEFEND ITSELF

It was Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that first theoretically substantiated the need for the people to take up arms in defence of their revolutionary gains. In studying the possible victory of a proletarian revolution in all or most of the developed countries they arrived at the conclusion that the defeated exploiting classes would stubbornly resist the power of the working people and would try to suppress the revolution with the help of well trained standing armies. Therefore, as soon as the triumphant proletariat takes over power, it will have to militarily defend its achievements.

Proceeding from the conditions that took shape during a later historical period, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin built upon these ideas concerning the need to defend the proletarian revolution with the help of armed force. He produced a doctrine on the armed defence of a revolution that has triumphed in an individual country. As Lenin put it, "No revolution is worth anything unless it can defend itself; but a revolution does not learn to defend itself at once."[1] He further wrote:

"After their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—throw themselves with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of the 'paradise' " they have lost [2]

In addition, the capitalists and landlords of any given country are closely connected in many different

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 124.
[2] Ibid., p. 254.

ways with the world bourgeoisie. Whenever their rule is imminently threatened, imperialism will always render full support to the counter-revolutionaries and will even wage war against a revolutionary people.

Having lost their future, the exploiting classes not only resist the revolutionary people, but also step up the fight against all progressive forces.

No sooner had the socialist revolution triumphed in Russia in 1917 than the landlords, capitalists, former tsarist generals and the bourgeoisie of other countries tried to crush the newborn Soviet state to deprive the working people of the rights and freedoms they had won. In March 1918 British marines were landed at Murmansk, followed by US, French and Canadian troops. In April US and Japanese forces seized Vladivostok. In May the Cossack General Krasnov established a counter-revolutionary dictatorship in the Don region. Then the Entente[1] provoked a mutiny of the 50,000-strong Czechoslovak Corps, formed out of former prisoners-of-war of the Austro-Hungarian Army in Russia in 1917. The corps was returning to Western Europe through the Far East. It was then that the British imperialists invaded Turkestan and Transcaucasia. Appraising the situation, Lenin wrote:

"Murmansk in the North, the Czechoslovak front in the East, Turkestan, Baku and Astrakhan in the South-East—we see that practically all the links in the chain forged by British and French imperialism have been joined."[2]

The imperialist intervention and the attack of the white guard forces formed inside the country against Soviet power merged with mutinies and conspiracies. In the summer of 1918 counter-revolutionary revolts were being hatched in 23 towns and cities. In July the "Left" Socialist Revolutionaries (a petty-bourgeois party) launched a rebellion in Moscow in order to seize power.

On August 30 a heinous attempt was made on Lenin's life.

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[1] An imperialist bloc of Great Britain, France and tsarist Russia which took shape in 1904-1907 to unite more than 20 countries, including the USA, Japan and Italy, in the First World War against the German-Austrian coalition.

[2] V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 23.

The flames of war against the workers' and peasants' state were spreading with growing force to more and more regions. By the summer of 1918 the interventionists and white guards had overrun three-quarters of the country's territory. The overall length of the fronts surrounding the young Soviet Republic was nearly 12,000 kilometres. As soon as the enemy took over an area the exploiters would immediately be restored to power and a regime of fierce terror introduced. Hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants were massacred. The factories and plants would be returned to their former owners and the land to the landlords. The working day in the industries would be increased to 10-12 hours. Soviet activists would be thrown into prison and shot. Factory workers and office employees suspected of pro-Soviet sympathies would be persecuted and discharged. Death barges would be towed up and down the Volga and the Kama. The victims in them would be starved, beaten or even killed. The white guards sent a death train from Samara to the East. Two thousand seven hundred Communist Party members, and other workers and peasants were squeezed into freight cars. Close to 2,000 were tortured to death or shot.

The US, British and French invaders created a network of prisons and concentration camps with 50,000 inmates in the occupied northern part of Soviet Russia. This number accounted for 17 per cent of the adult population of the region. In the course of a year 8,000 out of the 38,000 inmates of the prison in Arkhangelsk were physically eliminated. This was typical of all the places taken over by foreign occupation and internal counter-revolutionary troops.

The young Soviet Republic was in mortal danger. To break the ring of battlefronts surrounding it and to save the gains of the revolution it was necessary to form revolutionary armed forces.

Under the guidance of the Party of Lenin, and in very difficult conditions, the working people created the Red Army. This army was able to beat off the first onslaught of enemy attacks against Soviet power. However, despite these defeats, the imperialists would not abandon their plans.

In the spring of 1919 an army formed by the former tsarist Admiral Kolchak launched an offensive from the East. The US, British, French and Japanese imperialists generously supplied it with arms. Kolchak's attacking army was supported by the counter-revolutionary forces in the south, west and north of the country. The leaders of the Entente mustered close to one million officers and men to undertake a joint offensive against the Soviet Republic. There was fierce fighting on six battlefronts at the same time.

In the summer of 1919 the Entente shifted its main effort from the east to the south. The western imperialists now pinned most of their hopes on the white guard army under General Denikin. Launching an offensive, Denikin's forces seized Tsaritsyn (now Volgograd) and vast areas in the south of Russia and the Ukraine. His crack troops were heading for Moscow. They had already taken Kursk, Voronezh, Orel and even forced their way into the Tula region. They were only 180-200 kilometres from the Soviet capital—Moscow.

While the Red Army was engaged in ferocious battles against Denikin's forces, the white guard units under General Yudenich went over into the offensive on the Petrograd (now Leningrad) sector in October 1919. In certain places the enemy was within artillery firing range of the city. Petrograd, the cradle of the October Revolution, was gravely threatened.

Since the Red Army had administered a powerful rebuff to the counter-revolutionaries and interventionists, the USA, Great Britain and France organised another attack on the socialist republic in the spring of 1920. This time the main attack force was made up of the army of bourgeois-landlord Poland and the remnants of Denikin's troops put under the command of General Wrangel, who had taken refuge in the Crimean Peninsula.

One of the main organisers and active participants in the armed intervention against the Soviet republic was the United States of America.

American bourgeois historians have always tried to whitewash and conceal the complicity of the US monopolists and the role they played in this disgraceful crime against the young Soviet republic. But the facts are

against them. In August 1918 the US government published a declaration justifying the allied hostilities against Russia. In October, US politicians produced "comments" in response to President Woodrow Wilson's fourteen-point peace terms, which were actually a programme for the abolition of Soviet power and the dismemberment of Russia. The French and British plans for an intervention against Soviet Russia were in agreement with the USA's. Together with the British forces, US troops formed the main body backing the occupation regime in the north of Russia.

For three long, extremely hard years the Soviet people beat off the armed attacks of the interventionist and inner counter-revolutionary forces that were trying to do away with workers' and peasants' power in Russia. The newly born Soviet republic inflicted a major military and political defeat on world imperialism in the Civil War, which was also a war against foreign military intervention. According to Marxism-Leninism, it was not enough to overthrow the rule of the exploiters. Once power belonged to the workers and peasants they had to be able to defend militarily the achievements of the revolution at all times. The experience of the Civil War showed the soundness of this Marxist-Leninist thesis.

Imperialism did not abandon its efforts to thwart socialist construction even after the defeat of the internal counter-revolutionaries and foreign interventionists in the Civil War. Thus, in July 1938, after a series of provocative frontier incidents, Japanese troops invaded Soviet territory in the proximity of Lake Khasan, 130 kilometres from Vladivostok. Fierce fighting went on till August 11. It ended in the invaders being routed and driven out of Soviet territory. But this defeat of the Japanese imperialists did not teach them a lesson. One year later the Japanese warlords attempted to annex a sizable part of the Mongolian People's Republic, to advance northward, to straddle the Trans-Siberian Railway and to cut off the Soviet Far East from the rest of the country. As a result of a series of battles fought on the Khalkhin Gol, the Japanese forces suffered utter defeat, a factor that should have deterred Japan from undertaking an armed attack against the USSR during the Second World War.

German imperialism was hatching its plans for wars of aggression as well. With the help of US aid, Germany rehabilitated its national economy and built up its munitions industries, which were necessary for the creation of a big army. When the Nazis took over power in 1933 they established an openly terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary and chauvinistic quarters. Nazi Germany began all-out preparations for war.

Addressing a secret meeting of the top brass of the Nazi Wehrmacht in July 1940, Adolf Hitler announced his decision to attack the Soviet Union. In December, Plan Barbarossa—the plan for war against the USSR—was approved. In pursuit of this plan, Nazi Germany launched a perfidious attack on the USSR at daybreak on June 22, 1941 without a declaration of war. Its allies were Hungary, Italy, Romania and Finland, all of which were headed by reactionary governments.

The Nazis struck a very powerful blow against the Soviet Union. The enemy's army comprised five and a half million officers and men with 4,300 tanks, 4,980 fighting aircraft, 47,200 artillery pieces and mortars, and 190 fighting ships. Hitler was eager to brutally destroy the historic achievements of the Soviet people.

A statement Hitler made at a meeting of the Wehrmacht commanders gives an idea of the truly monstrous nature of the Nazi's plans:

"It is not enough for us merely to defeat the Russian army, to seize Leningrad, Moscow and the Caucasus. We must wipe this country off the earth and destroy its people."

The Nazis would raze whole towns, cities and villages to the ground, shoot civilians or put them to death in gas chambers, burn their bodies in "industrialised" crematoriums, subject them to horrible tortures and use them as "guinea pigs" in inhuman experiments.

The German fascists relentlessly pursued a policy of genocide. Out of the 20 million people lost by the Soviet Union in the war about half were civilians and prisoners-of-war murdered or tortured to death in Nazi-occupied Soviet territory. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens were killed in concentration camps in Germany.

During the war the Nazis destroyed 1,710 Soviet

cities and large and small towns, and over 70,000 villages. They demolished 32,000 industrial enterprises, plundered and ruined 98,000 collective farms and 1,876 state farms, and rendered 65,000 kilometres of railway tracks unserviceable. The USSR lost close to 30 per cent of its national wealth.

The war waged and ultimately won by the Soviet people and their Armed Forces against a most powerful and sly enemy was of unparalleled scope and ferocity. The Red Banner carried through the fire of bloody battles was hoisted over a vanquished Berlin in the spring of 1945.

The very history of the Soviet state irrefutably proves that it is impossible to build socialism and enjoy the fruits of peaceful labour, unless the revolution is assured an armed defence.

This is also borne out by the experience of the world revolutionary movement. There has not been a single case in which the exploiters have not tried to get back their lost power.

Marxism-Leninism rightly stated that the need to defend revolutionary achievements was an objective law. And the experience of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, the establishment and development of the world socialist system, as well as the national liberation movements in many newly-free countries has proved the validity of this thesis. New, progressive developments establish themselves in life through struggle against old, outdated phenomena.

Not all revolutions were able to defend themselves. In 1918-1919, for example, the reactionaries strangled the Hungarian and Bavarian Soviet Republics. Some of the later revolutions also failed to defend themselves.

With the help of armed force, international imperialism has attempted to abolish the revolutionary gains of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vietnam, and many other Asian, African and Latin American states.

The USA, as the principal imperialist power, has assumed the role of international gendarme.

All revolutions have been forced to defend themselves for long periods against internal and external en-

emies. The success of a revolution and the realisation of the rights and freedoms won by the working people depend on its ability to defend itself. To defend the revolutionary achievements of socialism is a formidable task. To this end it is necessary to have an adequate military organisation, i.e., an army formed and built by the people.

THE WHOLE PEOPLE'S CONCERN

The Soviet Armed Forces have been reliably defending the very life of the Soviet people and their fundamental interests. They have been selflessly serving their people, who provide the reinforcements for them, manufacture their equipment and weapons and, in the event of war, join hands with them to fight the aggressor, sparing no effort to defeat him.

The Soviet Armed Forces, which are truly of the people, are a real revolutionary internationalist force founded seventy years ago. They differ radically from those of capitalist states, which have always used them as the mainstay of the system of exploitation and capitalist domination.

The make-up of the Soviet Army reflects the inviolable alliance of the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia, the unbreakable union of all the nations and nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union. Military service in the USSR is an honourable obligation, and the defence of the socialist homeland is the sacred duty and concern of every citizen.

In the beginning the Red Army[1] was formed of volunteers, and its command personnel were elected. The backbone of its early units were the Red Guard detachments, which were armed formations made up of the more politically-developed workers. They were created during the preparations and the carrying out of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The Red Guards enriched the army with the experience of revolutionary struggle combined with the tradition of Bolshevik Party organisation and discipline.

[1] Called the Red Army prior to 1946.

Along with workers and peasants, soldiers of the old tsarist army joined the ranks of the new Red Army. Whole units and even formations of the old tsarist army sided with the new Soviet power.

The Red Army took shape as an army of fraternal friendship between the country's peoples, and was moulded in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. Internationalist fighters, including Hungarians, Poles, Serbs, Croats, Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Romanians, Austrians, Germans, Finns, Mongols, Koreans and Chinese, fought shoulder to shoulder with Red Armymen.

The army of the newly formed Soviet state was developed under extremely difficult conditions. There was an acute lack of command personnel, and a shortage of weapons, ammunition and clothing. Over a period of many months the vital bases of food, raw material and fuel production, such as the Ukraine, the Ural region, Siberia and the Northern Caucasus, were in enemy hands. Tremendous efforts were required to cope with hunger, to keep the transportation system working and the munitions industries going.

Acting on Lenin's proposal, the Soviet government addressed an appeal to the people: "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger". It set forth a clear-cut programme of action. The Soviets (local government authorities) and other revolutionary organisations were to defend the strategic positions to the last man and the last round of ammunition. If they were forced to withdraw, they were to demolish or destroy railway tracks and buildings with other means, remove the rolling stock to the rear and destroy the reserves of food and other valuables to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. All the able-bodied population not in the ranks of the army was required to help dig trenches and to carry out other defence works.

The appeal aroused the whole country. On February 23, 1918 mass rallies were held in Petrograd (now Leningrad), Moscow and other cities and towns of the country.

In the vicinity of Revel (now Tallinn), Gdov, Pskov, Narva and some of the other sectors of the battlefront the advancing German forces ran into determined resist-

ance from the Soviet military formations. On February 23 their advance on Petrograd was stopped.

To honour the courageous resistance of the Red Army detachments to the German invaders and to mark the mobilisation of mass revolutionary forces for the defence of the socialist Homeland it was decided to celebrate February 23 as the Birthday of the Soviet Army and Navy.

In spring 1918 the Red Army was made up of 300,000 volunteers. Out of this number only 199,000 were armed. These forces could not possibly cope with the foreign interventionists and white guards (counter-revolutionary forces inside the country). Therefore, the Soviet government decided to enlist broad sections of the working people for the defence of the socialist Homeland. To this end they executed a whole range of measures, such as the establishment of rural and urban district and regional military commissariats (military registration and recruitment offices), which were to register, train and mobilise able-bodied males eligible for military service. Universal compulsory military training was introduced. All able-bodied males from the age of 18 to 40 were to undergo a course of military training while continuing with their regular work. Nearly 800,000 men underwent this training in 1919.

Officer training courses were being urgently organised in Petrograd, Moscow, Kazan, Ryazan, Tver (now Kalinin) and other towns and cities. The best Red Armymen and workers were enrolled in them to become, after a few months of intensive training, platoon leaders, and company and battery commanders. In this way a network of military schools was created for the new army. During the Civil War some 60,000 Red Army commanders were trained from among workers and peasants. A group of gifted military leaders from the Party ranks and from among the working people was produced. Among them were Mikhail Frunze, Vassili Blucher, Kliment Voroshilov, Semyon Budyonny, Semyon Timoshenko, Vassili Chapayev, Sergei Lazo, Alexander Parkhomenko, Grigori Kotovski and Nikolai Shchors.

In addition to training workers and peasants to be Red Army commanders, the Soviet government enlisted

the services of regular officers from the old tsarist army. Their professional knowledge and experience was essential for the development of an efficient army and the control of its operations. Termed military specialists, these officers served under the control of commissars—representatives of the Party in the army—as commanders and staff personnel. They also worked as instructors at military educational establishments. In 1918 some 22,000 officers and generals of the former tsarist army joined the Red Army as volunteers or were mobilised for service in it. Most of them served honourably and played a big part in the forming of the Red Army. Some of them went on to become distinguished military leaders. Aleksander Yegorov, Mikhail Tukhachevsky and Boris Shaposhnikov became Marshals of the Soviet Union, and Joakim Vacietis and Sergei Kamenev were at different times commanders-in-chief of the Red Army.

The Armed Forces of the new Soviet state were to administer a rebuff to any aggressor on land, sea or in the air. Acting on the instructions of the Soviet government, the sailors of the Baltic Fleet saved most of the ships from being seized by the German imperialists. Though the Gulf of Finland was icebound, they transferred from Helsingfors (now Helsinki) to Kronstadt 233 warships, including six battleships, five cruisers, 54 destroyers and 12 submarines. Later these ships helped defend Petrograd and were formed into several flotillas. Soviet combat air detachments were created as quickly as possible, and by the summer of 1918 they numbered 260 aircraft.

It follows that the practical measures to build up a military force taken in the early half of 1918 prepared the ground for the creation of a mass regular army with established organisational forms, firm revolutionary discipline and centralised control.

In the grim war against international imperialism and internal counter-revolution the new Red Army became numerically stronger. Its organisation, armament and supply system improved as well. By the end of 1918 it had 800,000 officers and men, early in 1919—1,630,000 and as of November 1, 1920—5.5 million. Under Lenin's leadership, the Communist Party in-

spired the people for a selfless struggle and created a multimillion army to secure victory.

The Party convinced the masses that the Civil War being fought for the defence of the revolutionary gains was a just war. It kindled tremendous energy in the people and aroused their consciousness and desire to fight for the freedom and independence of their Homeland.

Various views were advanced as to what the army of a socialist state should be like. But in the context of the relentless war and after persistent search the Party established and upheld precisely the ideas and principles ensuring the invincibility of the Soviet Armed Forces in a clash with any aggressor. And practical experience has shown that they are sound and viable.

Though the country's industries, farming and transport system were in a state of dislocation, the Communist Party managed to gear the life of the Soviet republic to the needs of war, to turn it into a fighting camp and to begin manufacturing arms and ammunition.

With Lenin at the head, the Party Central Committee and Defence Council effected direct guidance of the military operations on all battlefronts, decided the questions concerning the concentration of forces, strategic planning, distribution of supplies and suppression of counter-revolutionary conspiracies. The Party was the Red Army's control centre both with respect to the battlefront and the rear. Distinguished Party leaders, including Felix Dzerzhinsky, Mikhail Kalinin, Sergei Kirov, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Valerian Kuibyshev, Anastas Mikoyan, Grigori Ordzhonikidze, Grigori Petrovsky, Josef Stalin and Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, working under the guidance of the Party Central Committee, contributed to the education of Red Armymen, built up its combat capacity and fortified its front and rear. The Party sent its best members to serve in the army. In 1920 more than half the Party's membership—over 300,000 Communists—were in the ranks of the Red Army. Fifty thousand of them lost their lives on the battlefields of the Civil War.

The Russian Young Communist League (RYCL) vigorously assisted the Party in the fight against the

enemies of Soviet power. Though information is incomplete, it is known that in 1918-1920 it sent to the army in the field at least 75,000 young fighters, who fought courageously for the ideals of the Revolution and contributed many bright pages to the history of the Red Army.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, founder of the Communist Party and leader of the Soviet people, directed the development of the armed forces and the heroic effort of the popular masses in the war against the foreign interventionists and internal counter-revolutionaries. He convinced the people of the correctness of the path charted by the Party and inspired them with confidence in their victory over the exploiters. Day in and day out, Lenin applied persistent effort to ensure the practical execution of the Party's and government's decisions. He dealt not only with policy matters bearing on the conduct of the war as a whole, but also with many details affecting the fighting on the battlefronts and functioning of rear establishments. His guidance was both effective and efficient.

He brilliantly exposed the bourgeois libellous allegations about "red militarism", writing, "Some foolish people are shouting about red militarism. These are political crooks... The imperialists of the whole world hurled themselves upon the Russian Republic in order to crush it, and we began to form an army which for the first time in history knows what it is fighting for and what it is making sacrifices for...

"I repeat, these are either fools to whom no political appraisal can apply, or else political crooks."[1]

The working class and other working people of many countries rendered the Soviet people and their army invaluable aid. "Hands off Russia!" was the slogan of a campaign that foiled many imperialist plans for the escalation of military intervention and interfered with the shipping of more troops and weapons earmarked for use against the Soviet republic.

The victory of the newly formed people's army in the war against the interventionists and white guards was of world-wide historic importance. It demonstrated the tremendous viability and invincibility of the Soviet state.

[1] V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 66.

After the Civil War the Soviet people began to rehabilitate and expand their economy and to foster cultural development. Their efforts were concentrated on healing the wounds of the war and the construction of a new, socialist society.

In 1921 it was decided to preserve the regular army. Though it was to be considerably smaller in size, it was to be better equipped. By February 1923 its strength had been reduced to 600,000 officers and men. The forming of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922 offered better possibilities for the country's economic, social and cultural progress, for its increased defence capacity. The voluntary association of the Union Republics within the framework of a single, federal state cemented the material and spiritual foundations of the people's army.

In 1924-1925 the government instituted a military reform. As a result, the commanding bodies of the army and navy were restructured, one-man command was introduced, and the system of combat training and political education was radically improved. In addition to regular army formations (which were relatively small), territorial army units were created in the country's internal military areas. The latter were located in the area of residence of the registered personnel, who were trained in them by regular commanders during brief camp periods. This made it possible to train large numbers of workers and peasants. The measures provided for by the military reform were covered by a Law on Compulsory Military Service enacted on September 18, 1925, the first All-Union (federal) law on compulsory military duty. Emphasising the class character of the Red Army, the Law stipulated that the armed defence of the USSR was to be entrusted only to working people.

In the 1920s the Armed Forces were better equipped technically and their fire power was also increased. Infantry and horse cavalry divisions now included artillery regiments, tank battalions, machine gun and signal units. Once an aircraft-manufacturing industry had been created, an Air Force was formed. Most of the Navy's fighting ships had been either reconditioned or modernised by the beginning of 1928 and a pro-

gramme of technical re-equipment was launched, including the construction of new warships and fleet auxiliaries.

The army and navy were receiving modern hardware. The Soviet people were now engaged in the fulfilment of the early five-year economic development plans the Party had outlined, and the industrialisation of the country and collectivisation of farming were underway. A cultural revolution of unprecedented scope had been launched. Illiteracy was being quickly abolished. Better educated young men were now entering the armed forces, which were becoming a school of education.

Special efforts were made to train highly qualified command, political and technical personnel who would be devoted to the Soviet system. In 1938-1939 military specialists were being trained by 14 military colleges, six military faculties at civilian higher educational establishments, 75 military schools, including 18 air force, seven naval, 11 artillery, nine armoured force, four signals and five frontier guard and internal force schools.

The units were being supplied with more small arms, ordnance, tanks and aircraft, whose manufacture met up-to-date requirements. A Soviet Pacific and Northern Fleets were organised. Having decided to discontinue the territorial system, from 1935 to 1938 the country switched over to regular Armed Forces, making it possible to increase the strength of the regular forces in the army and navy and to pave the way for a higher standard of combat training. The socialist state was taking measures in response to the mounting aggressiveness of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan.

In view of the deteriorating international situation, the Soviet people stepped up the rate of industrial development and increased the country's defence capacity. In terms of industrial output, the USSR held first place in Europe and was second in the world. Political and organisational measures were being effected by the Soviet government to build up the country's defence capability and the combat might of the Armed Forces.

A Law on Universal Military Duty was enacted in 1939 that proceeded from the far reaching socio-

economic changes resulting from the triumph of socialism. The new Law removed the class restrictions on military service and consolidated the principle of the maintenance of regular armed forces. The term of service for men was extended, as were the training camp periods for reservists, thus increasing the numerical strength of the army and navy. By January 1, 1941 the Soviet Armed Forces comprised 4,207,000 officers and men.

The existing munitions factories were modernised and new ones were built. New, more efficient weapons and other military equipment were being developed and manufactured.

This allowed for the army's more technically advanced re-equipping. In the first half of 1941 the forces received 2,700 aircraft of new types. The tank designers and manufacturers produced what were then the world's best T-34 medium and the KV heavy tanks.

From May 1940 to the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War on June 22, 1941 the number of artillery pieces in the Soviet Army increased more than one and a half times. Several new types of ordnance, including the BM-13 rocket mortar, were developed. The army was equipped with submachine and large calibre machine guns. The shipbuilding industry was expanded. At the time of Nazi Germany's attack, 533 warships were under construction, 312 of which, including 206 submarines, were launched.

Soviet military science advanced during the period of peaceful socialist construction, and the organisation and equipment of the Armed Forces improved. Proceeding from the existing historical situation, Soviet military science correctly determined the character of the future war and the methods of warfare.

The personnel were mastering the equipment and studying the methods of warfare used in the early period of the second world war. Political education was conducted to extend the commanders' knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory and to enhance the level of political consciousness of the men. Unquestionably, this contributed to the army's and navy's combat capacity.

The influence of the Party on the Armed Forces increased. The number of Communists in the forces

more than trebled from 1938 to 1941 to a total strength of half a million officers and men. The Party exercised an influence on all aspects of the life and work of the Armed Forces.

With the threat of invasion from Nazi Germany being imminent, 170 divisions, i.e., more than half in the Red Army, were concentrated in the frontier military areas. Fortified localities were being intensively built on the new western frontier of the Soviet Union.

Other defence measures were being devised and executed. But, because of the lack of time, it was impossible to put all of them into effect.

UNPARALLELED FEAT

On June 22, 1941 the Soviet Armed Forces became engaged with an extremely powerful and perfidious enemy in a mortal conflict. Nazi Germany had secured the resources of practically all of Western Europe. The war between the Soviet Union and fascist Germany was the largest confrontation between socialism and the striking force of world imperialist reaction. As far as the Soviet nation was concerned, it was a war of the whole people, a sacred Great Patriotic War.

The fierce attacks launched by the Nazi Wehrmacht against the Soviet Armed Forces at the outbreak of the war failed to demoralise the latter or break their will to fight. Though the Nazi command hoped to crush the morale of the Soviet Army and Navy with its blows, their officers and men displayed fortitude and heroism in action. Two German divisions were bled white in the battles for the frontier town of Brest in Soviet Byelorussia. Though the Brest Fortress was surrounded, its garrison continued to defend it for 29 days under the guidance of Captain Ivan Zubachyov, Regimental Commissar Yefim Fomin and Major Pyotr Gavrilov.

The Soviet frontier guards fought heroically on the Bug and Prut Rivers, near Przemysl, and in the vicinities of Brody, Dubno, Rovno, Grodno, Lutsk, Siauliai and Liepāja.

On June 23 the biggest tank battle of the early period of the war took place near the Soviet Ukrainian towns of Lutsk, Brody and Rovno. The Soviet forces held up the Nazi advance for a whole week on that sector.

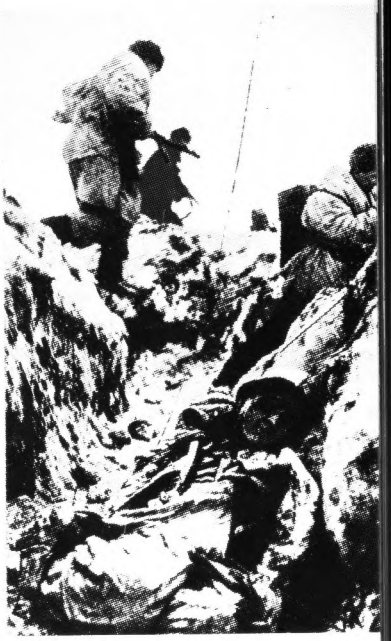
Soviet flyers displayed an indomitable spirit in their battles with the Luftwaffe. Even when the situation

It was Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and the Party he created that organised the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

During the Civil War and foreign military intervention in 1918-1920 the First Mounted Army (photo above) and the 25th Division under Vassili Chapayev (right in bottom photo) performed legendary feats of valour.

"Have YOU enlisted as a volunteer?" (1920).

Snapshots of Soviet officers and men taken during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.



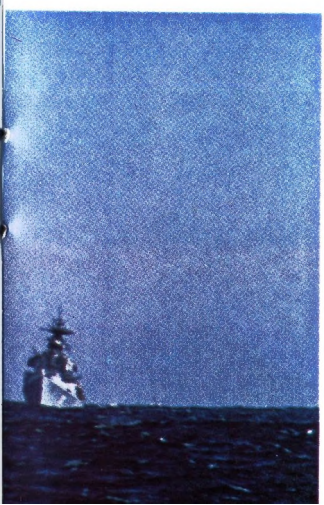
The Crimean Conference of the leaders of the Allied countries (February 4-11, 1945). The Conference charted and reached agreement on the war plans of the Allied powers and outlined the basic principles for postwar policies designed to establish a sound peace and an international system of security. In the photo: (from left to right) Winston S. Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Josef V. Stalin.

In 1944-1945 Soviet forces wholly or partially liberated 13 European and Asian countries from the aggressors.

Memorial to the Soviet Soldier-Liberator in Treptow Park, Berlin.

Moscow. The Oath of Allegiance ceremony by the Kremlin wall.

Soviet soldiers and sailors vigilantly stand on guard for peace and socialism. They are proficient in the handling of modern weaponry and other fighting equipment and are constantly enhancing the level of their combat training.



Servicemen helping farmers to gather the harvest.
The latter show their gratitude by entertaining them as guests.

The help given by Soviet officers and men to eliminate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl atomic power plant in 1986 was a real labour feat. The helicopter crews showed a distinguished performance. After the occurrence of the tragic accident they did radiological monitoring and delivered all sorts of freight, including special structures.

Servicemen make a substantial contribution to the accomplishment of economic tasks. Here they are shown participating in the building of the Baikal-Amur Mainline.

The Verasy Song Ensemble entertaining a ship's crew.

An hour of leisure.

In a soldiers' canteen.

Fraternal friendship between comrades-in-arms binds the servicemen of the armies of the Warsaw Treaty member countries—the reliable shield of socialism.

appeared hopeless they tried to secure a victory over the enemy. For example, on the first day of the war Dmitri Kokorev, having run out of ammunition, closed in with an enemy bomber to shear off its tail plane with the airscrew of his fighter. Having downed the Luftwaffe bomber, Kokorev made a safe landing. Six more Soviet pilots rammed enemy aircraft on that same day.

Hundreds and even thousands of infantrymen would fight tanks with improvised means. The wounded would refuse to leave the battlefield and would continue to fight to the last round. Soviet fighters thus demonstrated their unshakable morale and ardent patriotism already in the first days of the war.

The aggressor's superiority in manpower and equipment put the Soviet units in an extremely difficult situation. The Red Army was compelled to fall back eastward, suffering heavy losses in manpower and equipment.

The mortal danger threatening the Soviet state made it necessary to purposefully combine the efforts of the front and rear, to reorganise the guidance of the Armed Forces and to execute daring and effective decisions in a minimum of time.

On June 30 a top-level body with extraordinary powers—the State Defence Committee (SDC)—was formed. All power—state, military and economic authority—was concentrated in its hands. The SDC effected strategic guidance of the war through General Headquarters, Supreme Command. Josef Stalin was appointed chairman of the SDC, chairman of General Headquarters, Supreme Command, People's Commissar for Defence, and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the USSR Armed Forces.

With the western part of the country overrun by the enemy, the equipment of many industries was quickly relocated and set up in the east. From July to November 1941, 2,593 enterprises, including 1,523 major, primarily munitions factories were moved deep into the rear. Over 10 million people were evacuated to the eastern regions. The bulk of the munitions industries, which supplied the fighting forces with weapons and other equipment, were now concentrated in the Volga region, the Urals, Siberia, Kazakhstan and Soviet Central Asia.

The unprecedented scope of hostilities and combat losses made it necessary to send more and more forces to the battlefronts. Hundreds of units and formations were formed in the rear. New military schools and courses were opened to train command personnel. These measures made a major contribution to stopping the enemy drive and to stabilising the situation on the battlefront.

The Red Army's victory in the Battle of Moscow (September 30, 1941-April 20, 1942) was a precursor of the turn in the tide of the war against the aggressor, of the inevitable defeat of Nazi Germany. Though Germany was eager to draw Japan into the war, this victory deterred the latter from such a step.

In the summer of 1942 fierce fighting was raging in the south of the country.

The Battle of Stalingrad, unparalleled in terms of its scope and ferocity, went on for 200 days and nights.

The victory at Stalingrad was an outstanding military and political event. It played a decisive role in turning the tide not only of the Great Patriotic, but also of the whole of the Second World War. After the victory at Stalingrad the Soviet Armed Forces firmly took over the strategic initiative and retained it till the end of the war. The invaders were to be driven out of the USSR on a mass scale. The Red Army went over into a general offensive along a huge front that stretched all the way from Leningrad to the Caucasus. Having engaged the enemy in strenuous defensive combat in the summer of 1943, the Soviet Army foiled its attempt to encircle and destroy the Soviet forces on the Kursk Bulge, and then launched a sweeping counteroffensive. In the Battle of the Kursk Bulge the Nazi Wehrmacht lost over half a million officers and men, 1,500 tanks, over 3,700 aircraft and 3,000 artillery pieces. As a result of this victory and the appearance of Soviet forces on the Dnieper River, the ultimate defeat of Nazi Germany became irrevocable. The Red Army consolidated its strategic initiative. The offensive strategy of the fascist bloc had failed.

The Soviet people shall forever cherish the memory of the feat performed by Leningrad. On September 8, 1941 the enemy, after seizing Schliesselburg, cut off land access to Leningrad from the rest of the country. This marked the beginning of a 900-day siege. In spite of

death from hunger and artillery bombardment, the civilian population and the city defiantly weathered the siege. In Leningrad, because the front and the rear were one and the same, everybody fought. The city was defended not only by the infantry, artillery, air force and navy, but also by workers, engineers, scientists, artists, members of the medical profession, actors and even children.

The siege was finally lifted as a result of the Leningrad-Novgorod Operation executed in January-February 1944.

The victories of the Soviet Armed Forces caused the aggressive fascist bloc to fall apart. Italy withdrew from the war. The internal political situation in Romania, Hungary and Finland worsened. The peoples of France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece intensified their fighting for their liberation. The policy of the reactionary British and US ruling circles intended to protract the Second World War and to exhaust both the USSR and Germany came up against a dead end.

The Soviet Army opened the final phase of the Great Patriotic War in the beginning of 1944. Its mission was now to drive all the invaders out of the USSR, to help the peoples of Europe rid themselves of the fascist yoke and to complete the rout of Nazi Germany. In 1944 the Soviet forces dealt a series of crushing blows to the enemy along a vast front extending from Karelia in the north to the Black Sea in the south. They completed the liberation of their country from the Nazi invaders. Millions of Soviet people were liberated from captivity, and hostilities were now being conducted beyond the Soviet frontiers. The Soviet Armed Forces had begun their great mission of liberation.

In 1944-1945 the Soviet forces entirely or partially liberated 13 European and Asian countries with a combined population of 147 million people. From June 1944 till the end of the war close to seven million Soviet officers and men took part in the liberation of European countries. The Soviet people paid a high price for the freedom they brought to other countries. In the course of the fighting in Romania, Poland and Czechoslovakia 809,000 Soviet officers and men were killed. The overall losses of the Soviet Armed Forces during the liberation

of European and Asian countries exceeded three million killed, wounded or missing men.

In 1945 the heroic Red Army executed the specially-significant Berlin Operation. The Nazis were doing everything in a desperate attempt to delay their "Judgement Day". The entire expanse from the Nazi forward defence positions on the Oder and Neisse Rivers to Berlin had been fortified. The forces defending Berlin numbered more than a million officers and men with 10,400 artillery pieces and mortars, 1,500 tanks and assault guns, and 3,300 war planes. The Nazi leaders tried to frighten the people and their forces with the "horrors of Bolshevism" and terroristic punitive measures.

The Soviet command concentrated two and a half million officers and men on the Berlin sector with 42,000 artillery pieces and mortars, over 6,200 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 7,500 war planes. A splendid fighting spirit was displayed by the Soviet forces as they prepared for the assault on the capital of the Nazi Reich. Just before dawn on the morning of April 16 this assault was launched. Powerful antiaircraft searchlights brightly illuminated the battlefield to blind the enemy. The Soviet forces smashed the enemy's resistance and by April 21 had forced their way to the outskirts of Berlin.

The whole world held its breath as it watched the developments of the huge battle. Soviet officers and men gallantly stormed the enemy fortifications and fortified dwellings. The main centre of resistance was the Reichskanzelarei and the Reichstag building in which the Nazis had concentrated formidable forces. The assault on these buildings went on for two days running. In the evening of April 30 the Red Banner of Victory was hoisted by Sergeants Mikhail Yegorov and Meliton Kantaria over the Reichstag.

On May 8, 1945 the Act of Unconditional Surrender of Nazi Germany was signed at Karlshorst, a suburb of Berlin. May 9 was declared Victory Day over Nazi Germany. Moscow fired a 30-salvo 1,000 gun salute in honour of the gallant Armed Forces and the whole of the people who had made this victory possible.

The victory over the Nazi German invaders was secured through the combined effort of many peoples. Allied with the USSR in an anti-Hitler coalition were

the USA, Great Britain and France. The peoples and Resistance fighters of several Southeastern and Central European countries, such as Yugoslavia, Poland and Czechoslovakia, also contributed to this righteous cause. But the main force that stopped fascism from gaining world domination was the Soviet people and their Armed Forces. Unfortunately, many Western historians continue to try and belittle the USSR's role in the last war, despite the futility of such attempts.

The Red Army routed 607 fascist-bloc divisions, while the armies of the USA and Great Britain defeated 176. The Soviet-German Front accounted for 80 per cent of the Wehrmacht's losses in the war. The Armed Forces of the USSR destroyed the bulk of German equipment—up to 75 per cent of its tanks and assault guns and over 75 per cent of the Luftwaffe planes. US lend-lease supplies to the USSR made up only four per cent of the equipment used by the Soviet Union, the rest it manufactured itself.

The war in Europe ended with the surrender of Nazi Germany. However, the USA, Great Britain and their allies were still fighting the war against Japan in the Far East and the Pacific.

In keeping with the commitments made to its allies at the Big Three Conference in Yalta in the Crimea, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945. Hostilities began the next day.

The swift offensive of the Soviet land and naval forces and of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army was one of the factors deciding the outcome of the war. The Kwantung Army, which constituted the main body of the aggressor's force in Asia, laid down its arms. On September 2, 1945 the Japanese representatives signed the Act of Unconditional Capitulation. The rout of imperialist Japan marked the end of the Second World and Great Patriotic Wars.

Bourgeois historians and politicians have done their utmost to convince the public of their countries that the victory over Japan was mainly secured through the operations of the British and US Navies, and by the atomic bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their efforts have not been in vain. The rising generation, whose knowledge of history is poor, is par-

ticularly prone to such assertions. But facts are insuppressible, and reveal the real truth. Consider this. At the final stage of the war in the Pacific, Japan had a five-million-strong army, i.e., double its size at the beginning of the war. Its defeat would have taken the US and British Armies a long time. Therefore, the rout of the million-strong Kwantung Army—the main body of Japan's land forces—played a decisive role, and I do mean decisive, in that country's capitulation. The real reason for the US government's use of the atomic bomb was to demonstrate the new weapon, to intimidate the peoples of the world and to exert pressure on the USSR in the solution of postwar problems.

The Armed Forces of the USSR secured their historic victories in the Great Patriotic War through the concerted effort of the fighting services and arms. The land forces, comprising over 80 per cent of the overall strength of the Armed Forces, played a very significant part in the war. Their main fire power was the artillery, which was the defensive backbone and the offensive sledge hammer. The rocket mortars swept away the enemy forces as if by a violent windstorm. The armoured and mechanised forces were a powerful striking and highly manoeuvrable arm. The engineer, signal and chemical defence units also made a worthy contribution to the victory.

The Soviet Air Force flew over three million sorties during the Great Patriotic War, inflicting serious losses on the enemy's manpower and equipment. Soviet flyers destroyed 57,000 Luftwaffe aircraft on airfields and in air combat. They also rendered effective aid to the partisans fighting behind enemy lines.

The Soviet Navy also displayed heroism in the war. The feats performed by the sailors in the defence of Leningrad, Sevastopol, Odessa, Tallinn, Kerch, Novorossiisk and the Polar Region were unparalleled. Practically all the operations of the final phase of the war were executed with the close co-operation of the army and the navy. Soviet naval forces sank 1,600 enemy warships and transport vessels, and carried out over 100 amphibious landings.

The Air Defence Force gave reliable protection to the country's administrative-political and industrial cen-

tres, communication junctions and other objectives. Its gunners and antiaircraft artillery shot down over 7,000 Luftwaffe planes.

The Red Army's logistical mechanism and units displayed outstanding efficiency. It was their job to distribute and deliver vast quantities of weapons and other fighting equipment, ammunition, provisions and fuel. During the war the fighting services used 427 million artillery shells and mortar bombs, close to 17 billion rounds of small-arms ammunition, over 13 million tons of fuel and about 40 million tons of provisions and forage.

In the war against a strong and cruel enemy the Soviet officers and men exhibited superb political consciousness, morale, battle qualities and an indomitable fighting spirit. They displayed mass heroism, selflessness, fearlessness and persistence in pursuit of their duty to the people. Such has always been their distinguishing feature.

During the Great Patriotic War the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was conferred on 11,603 officers and men for their combat valour. Nearly three out of every four of them were Communists. Some seven million servicemen were awarded orders and medals (one out of every three was a Communist). Ten thousand nine hundred orders were awarded to entire divisions, regiments and ships. Many units were created guards units. The title of Hero City or Town was conferred on Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Kiev, Minsk, Sevastopol, Odessa, Novorossiisk, Kerch, Tula, Smolensk and Murmansk. Brest Fortress was named a Hero Fortress.

History has recorded very few cases of a nation erecting monuments and memorials to soldiers and sailors of another country. However, many countries have gratefully honoured the feat of the Soviet Soldier-Liberator with bronze and granite monuments. There are memorials to Soviet soldiers in Prague, Oslo, Belgrade, Vienna, Pyongyang, Budapest, Berlin, Sofia and dozens of other towns and cities.

Before the war's end, the Soviet Union rendered the liberated East European countries disinterested aid in the creation and equipment of 19 infantry, five artillery and five air divisions; six infantry, eight tank and

motorised infantry, 12 artillery and mortar, and five engineer brigades; and dozens of other units and sub-units with a total strength of 555,000 officers and men.

Utilising the advantages offered by the socialist economic system, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union created an efficient and rapidly expanding war economy, which formed the material foundation for the Soviet people's victory over the enemy. The planned use of resources made it possible to supply the fighting forces with everything they needed and to exceed Nazi Germany's output of weapons and other equipment.

From July 1, 1941 to September 1, 1945 Soviet industries produced 102,800 tanks and self-propelled guns, 112,100 war planes, 834,000 artillery pieces and mortars, and large quantities of other weapons and military equipment.

Socialist agriculture displayed its viability in the war as well, having given the Motherland about 70 million tons of grain from 1941 to 1944.

Soviet intellectuals made a worthy contribution to victory, with scientists and engineers improving weapon design and munitions production processes. The war showed that the military equipment of the Soviet Army and Navy was not only numerically, but often qualitatively, superior.

Writers and artists also fought for victory. Many of them worked for the military press, made regular trips to the fighting units and formations and entertained the troops at the front as members of concert companies.

The rout of the strongest aggressive army—the Nazi German Wehrmacht—revealed the superiority of the Soviet Armed Forces, of Soviet strategy, operational art and tactics—of military art in general—over those of the enemy. The operations of the Soviet Armed Forces were prepared and executed by distinguished military leaders, such as Georgi Zhukov, Alexander Vassilevsky, Ivan Bagramyan, Nikolai Vatutin, Leonid Govorov, Arseni Golovko, Andrei Yeryomenko, Ivan Konev, Nikolai Kuznetsov, Rodion Malinovsky, Kirill Meretskov, Kirill Moskalenko, Filipp Oktaybrsky, Ivan Petrov, Konstantin Rokossovsky, Fyodor Tolbukhin, Vladimir Tributs, Ivan Chernyakhovsky, and Vassili Chuikov.

Political workers in the army and navy helped build up the combat capacity of the forces and their morale. Their inspiring words and personal example raised the fighting spirit of the officers and men.

The ordeal of the war prompted many Soviet people to join the Party of Lenin. During its course close to 5.3 million people joined the Party. The number of Communists in the Armed Forces totaled 3.3 million at the end of the war. By the beginning of 1945 nearly 60 per cent of the Party's members were serving in the Armed Forces.

As it had in the past, the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League assisted the Party's work during the difficult years of the war. Its members made up a sizable share of the strength of the guards' rocket mortar units, of the airborne troops and of other formations. Three and a half million members of the YCL were awarded orders and medals for courage and valour in combat, 1,200 of them were honoured with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Having endured the crucible of numerous battles against the gravest odds to crush Nazi Germany and liberate many other peoples, the Soviet Army has become a subject of the world's keen interest. Western authors have written many books about it, though very few of them have given it a truthful, fair or just presentation.

Some bourgeois ideologists have deliberately twisted the truth. They claim that Soviet patriotism, shown by the staunchness and heroism displayed by the Armed Forces, stemmed from the "mysterious Russian soul" and enigmatic Russian character. Other authors have circulated equally far-fetched ideas and suppositions concerning the sources of the Soviet Army's strength.

As we see it, what primarily accounts for the invincibility of the Soviet Army is the Communist Party's leading, organisational and educational role. Equipped with Marxist-Leninist theory and a wealth of experience in revolutionary struggle and socialist construction. the Party competently analyses the military-political situation in the world, appraises and takes account of the trends in the development of warfare, and the practical possibilities for the country's economic and social development. These appraisals form the basis for the aims and tasks it sets the army. The Party's guidance of the Armed Forces covers all matters bearing on the strengthening of the material and spiritual fundamentals governing their development, the building of their combat capacity and the enhancement of their combat readiness.

Another source of the Soviet Army's invincibility is

the support it receives from the whole of the Soviet people, which proves that it is truly a people's army. The working people render their army purposeful, voluntary and total support. The people's attitude towards the armed forces is determined by the purpose they are called upon to serve, by the society's political and economic system. Countries having exploiting classes, by resorting to force, threats, deceit and bribes, use their armed forces in pursuit of reactionary and antipopular aims. The tsarist autocracy, for example, frequently employed the army for the suppression of workers and peasants who had risen up to fight for their rights.

During the Civil War and the period of foreign military intervention (1918-1920) millions of workers and peasants joined the Red Army to fight in its ranks, formed partisan detachments or worked in the rear to feed and equip their armed forces. The Red Army maintained close ties with the workers in towns and the peasants in the countryside. On Lenin's initiative the people conducted "help the front" weeks.

The names of the early Red Army units and formations created by the people reflected their organic connection with the workers from various parts of the country. Among them were the Morozovo-Donets Division, Pugachyov and Ivanovo-Voznesensk Regiments, Lettish Rifle Units, and the Samaro-Ulyanovsk Iron Division.

Lenin used to say that the people's concern for the Red Armymen fortified their morale and increased their strength in the war against the enemy. In response to this love displayed by the people, the Red Armymen would perform feats of heroism and noble deeds. For instance, when Red Armymen learnt that the workers of the central regions were suffering a desperate shortage of food they voluntarily reduced their rations to share their provisions with them.

During the period of peaceful socialist construction the ties between the army and the people acquired new forms. The whole generation of Soviet people who shouldered the main burden of the war against fascism acquired their knowledge of how to conduct warfare and became steeled for the forthcoming struggle within the framework of voluntary defence organisations.

Civilian organisations and establishments, work collectives and creative associations "adopted" military units or ships, rendering them material, technical and cultural services. At the same time military units and ships would exercise patronage of work collectives. When it was necessary to rebuild the Navy and develop the Air Force, the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League assumed patronage of these services.

This relationship was reciprocal. Whole military units and formations took direct part in the building of pits, factories and plants, the harvesting of crops, the modernisation of towns and villages and the development of transport facilities. Soviet Army and Navy Day on February 23 is celebrated as a national holiday.

The Party and the people exhibited special love and care for the Armed Forces during the Great Patriotic War.

When Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union millions of citizens left their peaceful pursuits to join the Armed Forces in defence of their country.

The workers of the Ural region undertook commendable initiative in forming a whole tank corps of volunteers, and arming and equipping it at their own expense. This famous tank corps distinguished itself in action by its crushing attacks against the enemy.

During the most difficult period of the Great Patriotic War, when the balance of forces on the battlefront was to the enemy's advantage, the people organised a Volunteer Corps. It was made up of people who were not subject to immediate call-up. The Volunteer Corps was a form of mass participation in the armed defence of the country, and its units were usually organised by Party committees. Four million Soviet patriots wished to join the Volunteer Corps. Close to two million joined the army in the field through it. The volunteers displayed absolute staunchness, courage and valour in action.

The collective farmers of Tambov region raised funds for the manufacture of arms and combat equipment for the Soviet Army. Their initiative was copied by the whole country. Millions of Soviet citizens donated their savings and valuables to the Defence Fund.

More than 100 billion roubles were contributed to the Defence Fund by working people. This money paid for the manufacture of 2,500 war planes, several thousand tanks, artillery pieces, 20 submarines and motor torpedo boats, and large quantities of other military equipment. In addition, the working people collected warm clothing for the fighting men and sent them parcels with gifts.

During the war against Nazi Germany blood donors formed a mass patriotic movement, yet another expression of the people's love for their Armed Forces. They supplied close to 1,700,000 litres of blood for the wounded, helping to save many lives and enabling the medical service to return thousands of officers and men to the ranks of the fighting forces.

Still another form of support rendered during the war to the Armed Forces by the people was the partisan movement behind the enemy lines. Such movements existed in the past as a form of the people's voluntary participation in just wars of liberation.

But in the war for the defence of the socialist Homeland it assumed a really mass people's and revolutionary character.

During the Great Patriotic War some 6,000 partisan detachments with a total strength of over one million (including underground fighters) and representing all the nationalities of the USSR were active behind enemy lines. They dealt powerful blows to the enemy. The partisans sought to disorganise its lines of communication, to hold and extend areas won back from it, to conduct intelligence working in its rear, and to assist the attacking Soviet armies. For the enemy this was a real second front. The people's avengers killed several hundred thousand Nazis and collaborators in the fields and forests of Byelorussia and the Ukraine, in Smolensk and Moscow regions, in the Crimea and in the Kuban region.

The support given to the Armed Forces by the people was a convincing manifestation of their approval of the policy pursued by the Party and government, and of their faith in the might of the socialist state.

The army's organisation and combat capacity are directly dependent on the political consciousness and

ideological convictions of its personnel. Serious political education is conducted in army units and on ships, promoted by the commanders, the Party and the Young Communist League and other public organisations.

Rallying the personnel around the CPSU and the Soviet government, maintaining an adequate level of combat readiness and developing lofty moral-political and fighting qualities are the main tasks of the political work done in the Soviet Armed Forces.

These general tasks are concretised in keeping with the practical conditions of life and work at every given period of time. The decisions of the epoch-making 27th CPSU Congress have had a decisive effect on the organisation and content of political work at the current stage. Held at a turning point in the process of constructing a communist society, the congress supplied answers to the fundamental questions facing the Party and Soviet society. Its strategic decisions are intended to advance socialism. While urging society to make broad use of scientific and technological achievements to bring about radical changes in the economy, the Party has paid special attention to the potentialities of the so-called human factor.

Acting in pursuit of the decisions adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress, the political organs and Party organisations have gone all out to activise the human factor, i.e., to gear political work to the practical problems of life. That words and deeds should never be at variance, and that plans should be backed by concrete action are imperative requirements of political work. Initiative and a creative approach to work are being promoted and an atmosphere of principledness is being reaffirmed in Party and YCL organisations. This is manifest in the frank and impartial discussion going on of outstanding issues and the critical appraisal of achievements.

Political work in the forces should be conducted in keeping with the general political situation in the country, on the basis of Party principles, i.e., on the basis of a class approach. It should be concrete and purposeful. It should be mainly directed towards the achievement of an effective influence on the personnel.

As advancement is made from one stage to another

the aims of political work become more complex. It is important that the results of earlier achievements be taken into consideration. The methods and means of political work must correspond to the new aims.

The might of a people's army is determined not only by its weapons and other combat equipment, but also by the ideological convictions of its personnel. It draws its strength from conscious discipline, efficient organisation and effective teamwork among all its elements and personnel. Strict discipline is accurately observed by all servicemen in response to orders and the regulations established by Soviet law and service manuals. This forms a basic element of the fighting capability and combat readiness of the armed forces.

The service regulations laying down the rules of behaviour and work for Soviet servicemen have been formulated in full conformity with the Constitution of the USSR, and the policy of the CPSU and Soviet state. Their purpose is to solidify the armed forces.

Experience has shown that to assure discipline the men must realise its importance and need for it, must know the regulations and meticulously observe them. High disciplinary standards can be achieved by mutal exactingness, comradely assistance and the organisation of duties and the life of the personnel in strict keeping with regulation requirements. The conscious character of Soviet military discipline distinguishes it from the discipline in the armed forces of capitalist states.

BULWARK OF PEACE AND CONSTRUCTION

The Soviet Army has foiled every attempt made by the enemies of socialism to destroy the world's first workers' state. Thanks to their ability to administer a crushing rebuff to any aggressor, the Soviet Armed Forces have safeguarded the peaceful constructive efforts of the Soviet people, their friends and allies, have upset the schemes of world reaction to abolish or weaken socialism with the help of armed force, and have prevented the imperialists from unleashing a nuclear world war.

The present international situation is characterised by competition between two lines in world politics.

The USSR and the other countries of the socialist community firmly and consistently strengthen the peace. They have been trying to remove the threat of war, to curb the arms race and to defend the sovereign rights and independence of peoples.

The reactionary quarters in the USA and NATO have been aggravating the confrontation between them and the socialist countries, they have been trying to exert pressure with the help of military strength, to escalate the arms race, to suppress and defeat progressive and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world.

The USA has launched an unprecedented increase in military spending allocating $ 1,800 billion for the military for the 1986-1990 period. US armed forces are being built up in Europe and Asia, in close proximity to the African continent, and in Central and South America.

The Soviet Union, its friends and allies have been conducting a peaceful policy. They are eager to change the current course of international relations and to discontinue the stockpiling of more and more destructive weapons. The USSR believes that all efforts should be directed towards preventing a nuclear war—all types of nuclear wars, whether they be big or small, full-scale or "limited".

The 27th CPSU Congress has again positively reaffirmed the Soviet Union's adherence to a policy of peace, goodneighbourliness and co-operation. The Party's main effort in international relations is concentrated on fighting against the nuclear danger, the arms race, for the preservation and maintenance of peace. As the Party puts it, the Soviet Union's pivotal task in this field is to accomplish the programme of complete and universal elimination of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction by the end of this century set forth in the Statement of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, of January 15, 1986.

On November 27, 1986 the leaders of the USSR and India signed the Delhi Declaration, which contained ten principles for a nuclear-weapon free and non-violent world. These principles have opened promising prospects for the future of all humanity.

The Soviet Union has reaffirmed its readiness to engage in negotiations with the USA on a major reduction of naval forces in the Indian Ocean at any time. It is prepared to conduct talks with the USA and Asian countries concerned on confidence-building measures in the military sphere with respect to Asia and the bordering Indian and Pacific Oceans, provided military bases are dismantled in these regions.

The fact that the USSR has no such bases is additional proof of its peaceful policy.

And the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of medium-range and shorter-range missiles, signed a year later, on December 8, 1987, in Washington, gave a new impetus to the Soviet Union's peace efforts.

The signing of the treaty generated the hope that strategic systems and tactical weapons would be dismantled as well.

The agreement reached on this issue is a major event in world politics, a victory for the new political thinking.

The technical level of the equipment of the Soviet Armed Forces enables them to accomplish their historical mission with up-to-date means of warfare, that is, enables them to serve as a bulwark of peace and constructive effort. It is appropriate here to mention that the Soviet Union has never armed itself for the sake of arming, but was only forced to do so in response to challenges from the West. It has always found an effective reply to every escalation undertaken by the West. And, unless the United States abandons its notorious Strategic Defence Initiative, the USSR will find an antidote to it.

The spiritual sphere of socialist society exercises a powerful effect on the combat capabilities and readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces. It is characterised by a high level of scientific knowledge and culture of Soviet citizens. The overwhelming majority of the country's population adhere to communist ideology and ethics. And this is true about the men who serve in socialist armed forces. Today 97 per cent of Soviet servicemen have a higher or secondary education, as compared to 12 per cent before the Great Patriotic War. In addition to completing their general secondary education, close to 80 per cent of the draftees are learning trades or professions at vocational schools, other secondary educational establishments, or as they work in industry or farming. The number of technical specialists from rural areas is steadily increasing. More than four out of every 10 draftees from the countryside are machine operators. This enables the men to master their basic weapons and related specialities quickly, and also to learn combat proficiency from example. The fact that they are trained and educated by experienced, highly competent, commanders helps achieve high standards in combat efficiency. At present, over 70 per cent of the officers have a higher military or specialised military education (i.e., an increase of 28 per cent over a decade ago). Over 90 per cent of the officers are Communists and YCL members. One officer out of every two has a regular engineering education. In addition to being competent professionals, good organisers and instructors, the off-

icers are well-versed in political science and theory. They are rightly regarded as the backbone of the army and navy.

The combat capacity of the Soviet Armed Forces is an alloy of its officers' and men's spiritual potential and hardware capabilities.

Even in peacetime Soviet officers and men are able to display their intrepid spirit, indomitable courage, selflessness and heroism. Soviet servicemen have helped explore and develop the Arctic Region and outer space, build some of the most difficult sections of the Baikal-Amur Mainline in the permafrost zone, fight natural disasters and eliminate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl Atomic Power Station.

Ethical standards and fighting capabilities have once again been exhibited by Soviet servicemen in pursuit of their internationalist duty in friendly Afghanistan.

When the revolution in Afghanistan was in mortal danger from internal counter-revolutionaries and international imperialist forces, the revolutionary government of the country appealed to the USSR for aid. In response to their request, the USSR brought a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. This decision was fully in keeping with international law. The USSR and Afghanistan proceeded from the commitments they had assumed under Article 4 of the Treaty of Friendship, Goodneighbourliness and Co-operation signed by the two countries on December 5, 1978, and also from Article 51 of the UN Charter which provides for the collective and individual self-defence of states.

In the fall of 1986 six Soviet regiments returned home.

The USSR fully supports the programme of national reconciliation advanced by the Afghan leadership. Speaking in Washington on December 10, 1987, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev stated:

"We put the question of Afghanistan as follows: the political decision on the withdrawal of troops has been taken. We've named the limit—12 months. It could be less. ... Our position is that the beginning of the withdrawal of troops must at the same time become the beginning of the termination of assistance in arms and

money to the Dushmans. From the very first day this is declared, our troops will start withdrawing. They will not take part in military operations, except in self-defence. Hostilities will cease and a process of political settlement will begin. We shall facilitate this process as much as our influence allows. But the main effort should be made by the real forces within Afghanistan itself, by all the sides concerned."

The Soviet Armed Forces are a reliable bulwark of peace and constructive effort. The preparedness of the Armed Forces to defend the country's revolutionary achievements means above all the preparedness of manpower, for it is people that develop and operate the weaponry and other combat equipment. They are the executives, organisers and inspirers. It is they that implement the ideas, and carry out the decisions and plans. Nothing can be done without them.

The formation of the world's first socialist army in the Soviet Union was an unprecedented event in the history of warfare. Under capitalism the standing army is always an instrument in the hands of the exploiters, oppressors, aggressors and warmongers. In contrast to this, in a workers' and peasants' state the army is the main tool for the defence of its revolutionary achievements and for safeguarding peace between nations. Lenin, speaking about this difference of purpose and the new nature of the serviceman's duty in the socialist army, said:

"... Now we need not be afraid of the man with the gun because he protects the working people and will be ruthless in suppressing the rule of the exploiters."[1]

The Soviet Armed Forces have a remarkable and heroic record. During the Great Patriotic War they stood up to a most crucial ordeal. Together with the armies of the fraternal socialist countries they form a reliable bulwark of peace and construction.

At the meeting of their Political Consultative Committee held in Berlin on May 28 and 29, 1987, the states party to the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Co-

[1] V.I.Lenin. *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 463.

operation and Mutual Assistance signed a document entitled "On the Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty Member States". Essentially defensive, their military doctrine is designed to prevent both nuclear and conventional war and pledges their determination never to start military operations in any circumstances against any state or an alliance of states, except when they have become a target of armed attack themselves.

They forswear the first use of nuclear arms and lay no claim to any foreign territories either in Europe or outside it; they do not treat any states or nations as enemies; and they call for all international disputes to be settled by exclusively peaceful means.

The meeting also issued a communique.

The adoption of these documents is fresh evidence that the Warsaw Treaty member states and their armed forces strive for peace.

The 27th CPSU Congress charted a course for the country's accelerated socio-economic development, and, in keeping with that, the USSR is restructuring its economic life and Party and political work. This restructuring is reflected in the Armed Forces as well.

The Party attaches great importance to solidarity, and political and economic co-operation with the countries of socialist orientation.

The CPSU supports the just struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American countries against imperialism and the transnational corporations for their sovereign right to use their resources as they see fit and for the abolition of the enslaving debts imposed upon them by the imperialists.

The Party regards it as its internationalist duty to support the struggle of the peoples still oppressed by racism, those who continue to be victims of apartheid.

The seventieth anniversary of the foundation of the Soviet Armed Forces finds them with a mighty potential. They are prepared to rout any aggressor. The Party, the state and the people have outfitted them with powerful weapons developed in line with the latest achievements of modern science and technology. Soviet servicemen have mastered them to perfection. True to the tradition of selfless service to the Homeland, they

respond to the concern displayed by the Party and the people with self-denying effort in pursuit of their duty. They honourably live up to their patriotic and internationalist duty in defence of the great achievements of socialism. Soviet servicemen are everalert, and, like all Soviet citizens, they are on the side of peoples fighting against imperialist aggression, diktat, display of force and terrorism.

Алексей Иванович Сорокин

СОВЕТСКАЯ АРМИЯ — АРМИЯ НАРОДА

на английском языке

Цена 35 к.

Alexei SOROKIN

Admiral Alexei SOROKIN fought in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. He was awarded many orders and medals for gallant behaviour in battles against the Nazi invaders.

After the war he graduated from the V.I.Lenin Military Political College. He has held high posts in the Soviet Navy.

Since 1981 he has been first deputy chief of the Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy.

Novosti Press Agency Publishing House